

Message Text

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SUBJ: GOP REACTION TO ELECTION RESULTS

REF: LISBON 2402

SUMMARY: VARIOUS GOP (AFM) PERSONALITIES HAVE COMMENTED ON APRIL 25 ELECTIONS RESULTS: COMMON THEMES EMERGING ARE: ELECTIONS DEMONSTRATED PORTUGUESE PEOPLE'S CIVIC-MINDEDNESS AND ACCEPTANCE OF AFM'S PREVIOUSLY-ANNOUNCED SOCIALIST OPTION; HIGH VOTER TURNOUT AND ELECTION'S ORDERLINESS PROVED FALSENESS OF RUMOR CAMPAIGN; RESULTS SHOULD NOT BE READ AS ENDORSEMENT OF "MODERATION" (IN SENSE OF "SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC" OPTION); AND CHANGES IN PRO-VISIONAL GOVERNMENT FLOWING FROM ELECTIONS ARE EXCLUDED. END SUMMARY.

1. BESIDES MINISTER FOR MASS COMMUNICATION CORREIA JESUINO, FOLLOWING LEADING MEMBERS OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL HAVE COMMENTED ON ELECTION RESULTS: PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES,
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ADMIRAL ROSA COUTINHO, MAJOR VITOR ALVES, LT. COL ANTONIO

CHARAIS, CAPTAIN VASCO LOURENCO AND BRIG. OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO. ALL NOTED HIGH VOTER TURNOUT AND ORDERLINESS OF ELECTIONS, CALLING THIS DEMONSTRATION OF PORTUGUESE PEOPLE'S CIVIC-MINDEDNESS.

2. BRIG. CARVALHO SAID TURNOUT EXCEEDED ALL EXPECTATIONS, COMING AFTER RUMOR CAMPAIGN THAT FORESAW EXTENSIVE VIOLENCE, CLAIMED AFM DID NOT REALLY WANT ELECTIONS, AND DERIDED ELECTIONS AS A FARCE. WHILE A FEW INCIDENTS OCCURRED, THEY WERE INSIGNIFICANT. SAID RESULTS RATIFIED "SOCIALIST OPTION," PROVED MATURITY OF PORTUGUESE PEOPLE.

3. CHARAIS SAW ELECTIONS AS CLARIFYING POLITICAL SCENE, OPENING ROAD TO SOCIALIST OBJECTIVE AFM HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED. LOURENCO SAID RESULTS SHOWED THAT PEOPLE AGREE WITH PLATFORM AFM INVITED POLITICAL PARTIES TO ACCEPT. ALVES SIMILARLY CALLED RESULTS A "RATIFICATION" BY PEOPLE OF AFM-PARTY PACT, GIVEN FACT THAT VOTERS OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORTED THOSE PARTIES WHICH SIGNED IT. AFM THEREFORE CAN DISPOSE NOW OF BOTH REVOLUTIONARY AND POPULAR LEGITIMACY IN FOLLOWING SOCIALIST ROAD.

4. SOME DIVERGENCE OF OPINION EVIDENT ON QUESTION OF PORTUGUESE PEOPLE'S POLITICAL MATURITY, AS EVIDENCED BY HIGH TURNOUT AND RELATIVELY LOW NUMBER OF BLANK BALLOTS CAST. PM GONCALVES SAID VOTE SHOWED THAT PEOPLE'S POLITICAL CONSCIENCE WAS "MATURING," A PROCESS WHICH WILL CONTINUE; ROSA COUTINHO HELD THAT PEOPLE MAY NOT YET BE SUFFICIENTLY MATURE, BUT THAT CIVIC SPIRIT IS THERE; CORREIA JESUINO ACKNOWLEDGED SURPRISE AT UNEXPECTEDLY LOW NUMBER OF VOTERS CASTING BLANK BALLOTS, WHICH "IN NO WAY CONFORMS WITH REALITY." JESUINO REFERRED TO PRE-ELECTION AFM POLLS, WHICH SHOWED ROUGHLY 40 PERCENT OF VOTERS UNDECIDED, AND REJECTED NOTION THAT 93 PERCENT OF ELECTORATE (THOSE VOTING FOR PARTIES) IS ALREADY POLITICALLY EDUCATED.

5. JESUINO REJECTED INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AS AN ENDORSEMENT FOR "MODERATE" POLITICAL LINE. ON THE CONTRARY, RESULTS ARE REINFORCEMENT FOR SOCIALIST OPTION SET FORTH IN AFM'S PACT. MAJORITY OF VOTES WAS CAST FOR SOCIALISM, NOT SOCIAL DEMOCRACY: "THE POSSIBILITY OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY TAKING HOLD IN PORTUGAL MUST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE COMPLETELY SET ASIDE." ALVES WAS EQUALLY FIRM IN ECHOING THIS VIEW: TO GO IN ANY DIRECTION OTHER THAN THAT ALREADY SET FORTH WOULD BE "TO DEFRAUD THE ELECTORATE AND BETRAY THE PACT. THIS IS SOMETHING THE AFM WILL NEVER TOLERATE."

6. GONCALVES, EMPHASIZING THAT PACT IS MEANT TO BE COMPLIED WITH, RESTATED PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED POSITION THAT CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AND COMPOSITION OF PROVISIONAL

GOVERNMENT ARE TWO SEPARATE MATTERS. JESUINO, SHARING THIS
VIEW, DID NOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY OF A FUTURE CABINET REMODELING.
HOWEVER, SHOULD THIS TAKE PLACE, IT WILL BE RESULT OF OPERATIONAL
REASONS, NOT ELECTORAL ONES.
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